

asserts that the disclosure is silent with respect to an 'uncrumpled' state and that there is likely to be at least some degree of crumpling during the Applicants' disclosed washing methods.

Without conceding the merits of the Examiner's prior rejection, the Applicants have, in claim 21 of the present application, replaced the limitation 'uncrumpled' with 'uncompressed,' which limitation is clearly supported by the Applicants' specification. The Examiner in the previous rejection cited MPEP §2173.05(i) to support her assertion that negative limitations or exclusionary provisos must have basis in the original disclosure. The Applicants point out, however, that such disclosure need not be explicit, but rather may be an inherent function, feature, property, etc. of the Applicants' disclosed methods (see MPEP §2163.07(a)). The Applicants assert that one of ordinary skill in the art would be readily aware that the Applicants' disclosed fabric washing procedures inherently involve washing the fabrics in an essentially uncompressed state, wherein they are not subjected to externally applied compressive forces tending to crush, squeeze, or ball-up the washed fabrics. Accordingly, the Applicants assert that the above-mentioned limitation of claim 21 is fully supported under 35 U.S.C. §112, paragraph 1, by the Applicants' written description. Furthermore, as the Examiner has conceded, the presence of such limitation is sufficient to distinguish the claimed subject matter over the prior art of record (see section 4 of the above-mentioned Final Office Action).

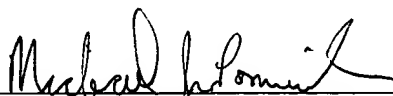
CONCLUSION

On the basis of the above remarks, it is believed that claims 1-21 define patentable subject matter and are in condition for allowance. An early notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

If, for any reason, the Examiner believes that a telephone conversation with Applicants' representative would expedite prosecution, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (617) 720-3500. Please charge any fee or fee deficiency occasioned by this amendment to Deposit Account No. 23/2825.

Respectfully submitted

By:



David Wolf, Reg. No. 17,528
Michael J. Pomianek, Reg. No. 46,190

Wolf, Greenfield & Sacks, P.C.
600 Atlantic Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02210-2211
Tel. No.: (617) 720-3500
Attorney's for Applicant(s)

Docket No. M0459/7019DW
Date: March 5, 2001